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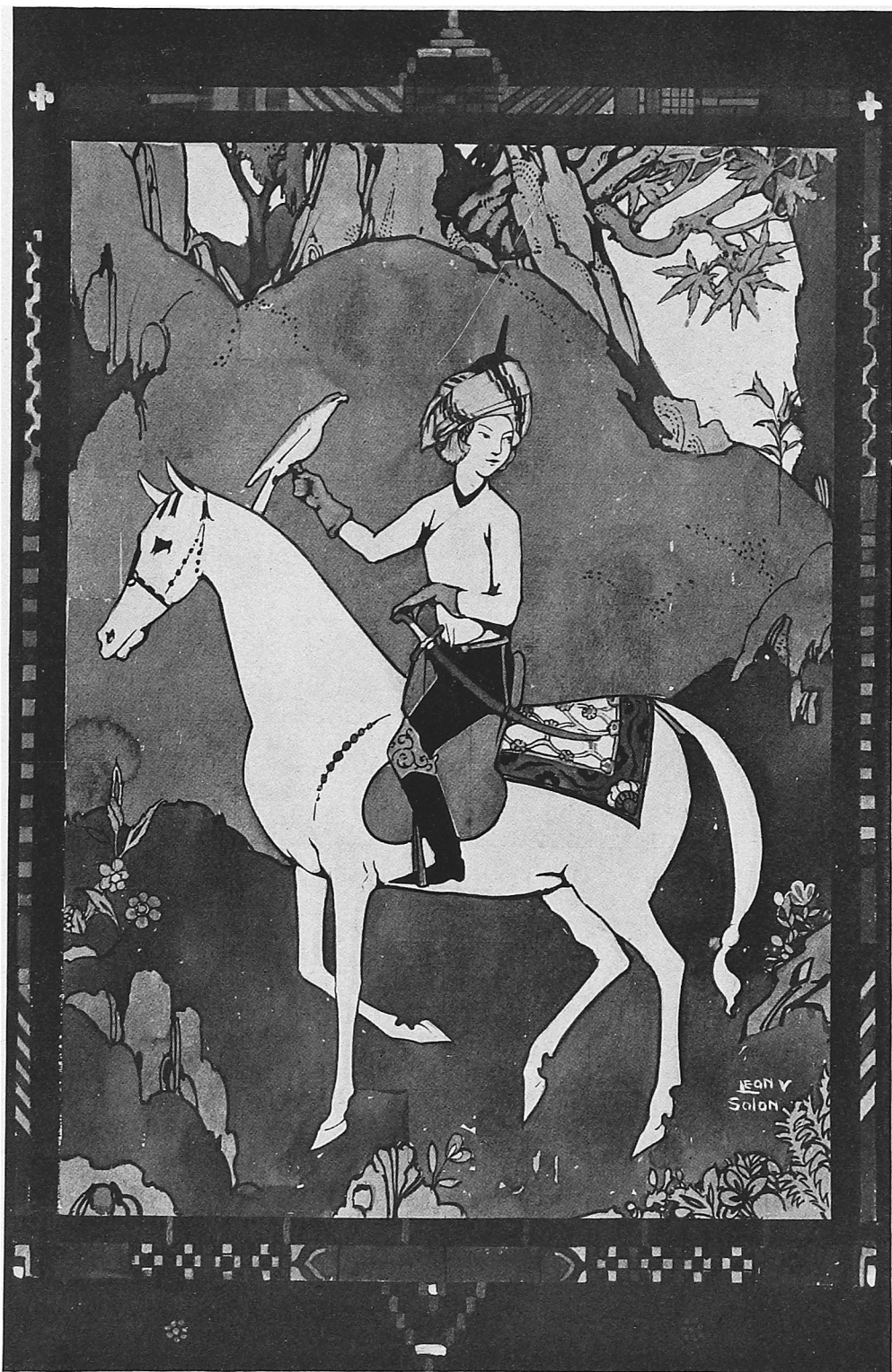
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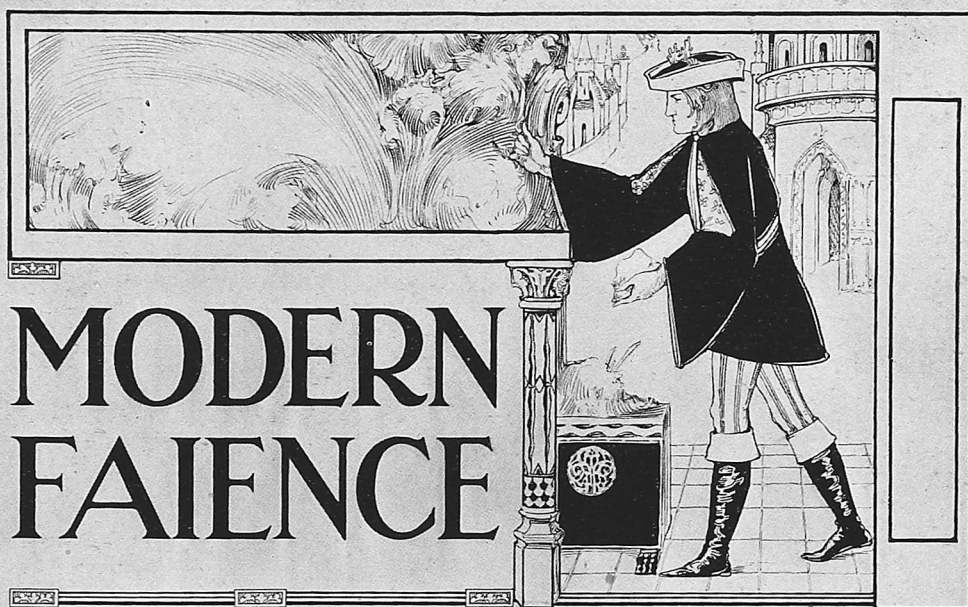
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"THE PERSIAN HUNTSMAN"

—Courtesy American Encaustic Tiling Co., Zanesville, O.

(Persian Panel in Cloisonné Gobelin glazes)



MODERN FAIENCE

Art Tiling—Its Place in Architecture and Decoration

By EVELYN MARIE STUART

IN OUR day, as in all others, architecture is seeking forms adequate to express the spirit of the times while pleasing the eye of the observer. It so happens that this is a radiant and colorful day whose art is one of a brilliant type, as will have been observed by all who attend exhibitions of the works of modern painters, where vivid effects of luminosity are achieved with the purest and brightest of hues.

It is not, therefore, surprising that architecture should begin to relieve its usual austerity of cold greys and browns and glittering white with colors rich and lovely, introduced through the medium of mosaic

and art tile. Not that these forms of decoration are by any means new, for they date back to the palace of Artaxerxes at Susa, which was entirely constructed of colored faience, but rather that their use on exteriors in countries of our climate and latitude is novel.

Perhaps the admixture of Latin blood is beginning to assert itself in the general characteristics of the American race, now in the process of amalgamation, showing forth in a love of beauty as expressed by color, or perhaps the skyscraper with its well nigh impossible problem of adequate and effective decoration, is responsible for this resort to a treatment heretofore un-



"A SULTAN"

*—Courtesy American Encaustic Tiling Co., Zanesville, O.
(Persian colorings in Gobelín glazes, Cloisonné outline)*

dreamed of among us. Following this latter supposition, it would certainly seem that tile and faience, the brilliant colors of which may be appreciated from a distance, are an effective and appropriate adjunct to carvings and gargoyles placed beyond the range of appreciation, or heavy pillars which, though imposing from the street, seem insignificant in their two or three stories of height when the entire building is viewed from a distance.

Great towers, famous for their great height, are likewise conspicuous by reason of the exterior treatment of faience and marks, in this respect, perhaps, the beginning of a new era in architectural adornment. It is certain that architecture in general is undergoing changes which are destined to minimize the use of stone carving and it seems not unlikely that faience must take its place.

There is much also to be said in favor of this form of embellishment, which so discriminating a critic as Ruskin in his "Seven Lamps of Architecture" admits as true, beautiful and practical, the last by reason of its excelling every other material in permanence. It seems odd, when we reflect upon it, that a work of man, a mere bit of baked or dried clay, should possess greater wearing qualities than those of the hardest rocks, proving stronger in fire and frost resistance and imperviousness to decay.

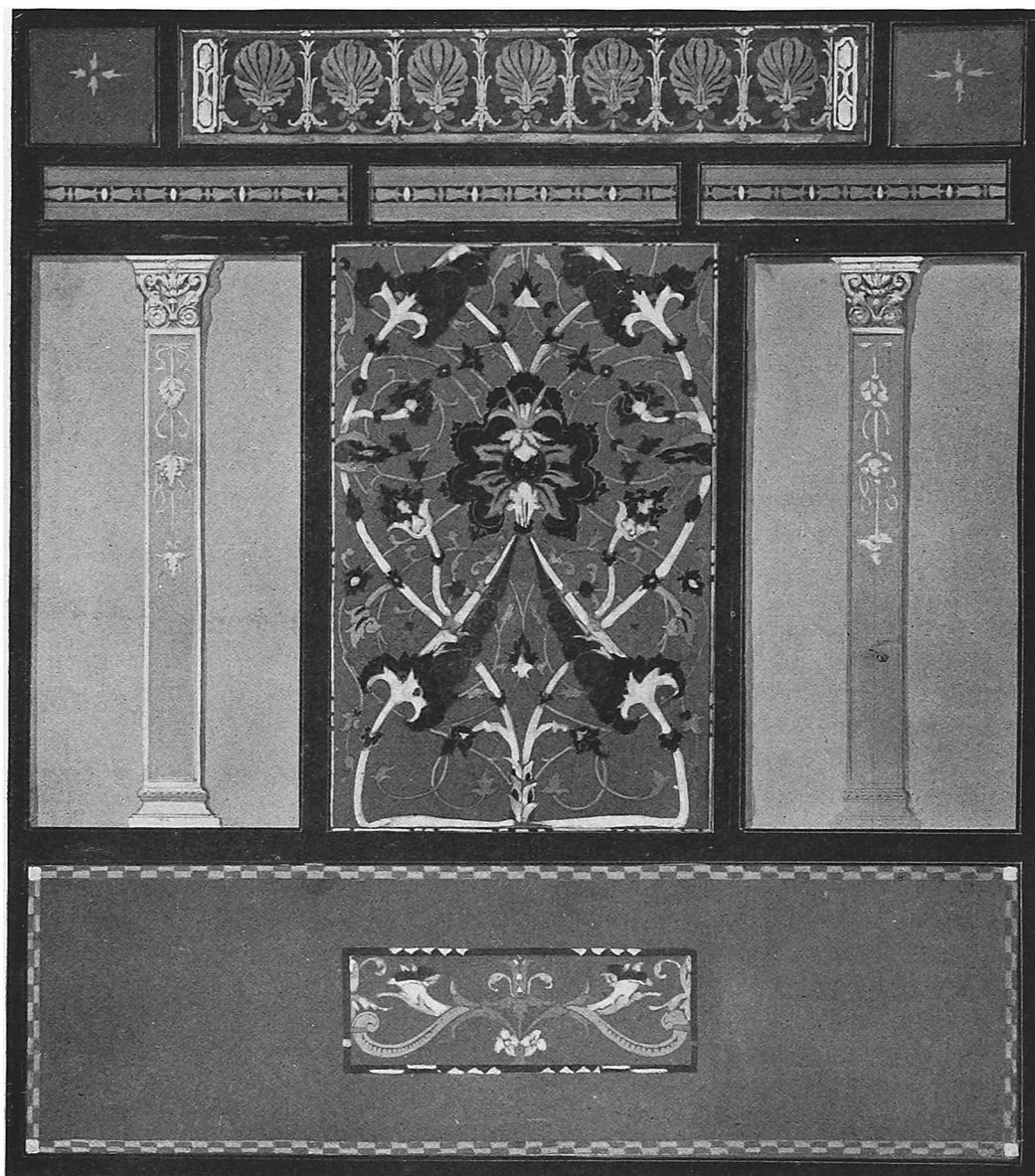
Taking this into consideration, we might wonder that the employment of tile on exteriors had so far fallen into disuse as to produce an effect of novelty upon its reappearance. Greek, Egyptian and Gothic architects thus enriched their edifices and the Moors and Italians likewise resorted glad-



A DESIGN IN THE CHINESE STYLE FOR FLOORS

—Courtesy American Encaustic Tiling Co., Zanesville, O.

ly to this means of achieving beauty. All of these craftsmen, however, worked under different conditions of light and atmosphere to those which we must take into consideration, and it was only as modern science came to the aid of art that the methods of the ancients became reconciled with our climatic conditions. Until the discovery and perfection of mat glazes there existed a very reasonable objection to the use of glazed surfaces as a means of introducing color, for the old, brilliant or mirror glaze reflects rather than absorbs light, thus failing of richness and even approaching garishness. These shimmering tiles have, from the earliest times, proved most effective in the Orient where everything glistens in the brilliant light of a glittering sun. When the Moors, who were among the greatest potters of Europe, brought their knowledge of this art and of architecture to Spain, their instinctive and unfailing taste suggested a



EXHIBITION WALL SCHEME SHOWING THE ADAPTATION OF RENAISSANCE STYLE TO THE CLOISONNÉ GLAZES; FAIENCE PILASTERS, BLACK WOOD FRAMING

—Courtesy American Encaustic Tiling Co., Zanesville, O.

softer surface effects, the bright glazes proving unsuited to the Spanish atmosphere. They therefore, introduced tin glazes which, in their softer surface effect, were a very close approach to some of our modern mat glazes.

To the Moors indeed, we owe much of the perfection and beauty of the tile work of the present day, for they set the example, evolved the ideal. Their architects, like ours of today, were obliged to contend with the problem of erecting stately edifices quickly and at the least possible cost. With them it was the necessity of subduing and dazzling conquered races; with us, it is the necessity of keeping up with the pace of modern commercialism. The favorite form of decoration in the countries from which they came had been colored marbles laboriously laid by hand in costly and intricate mosaics. These, however, were too expensive and too slow in the making to suit the purpose of the invaders. Therefore, they substituted tile, wherein, by simpler and less expensive operations, they could achieve in one slab or block several square

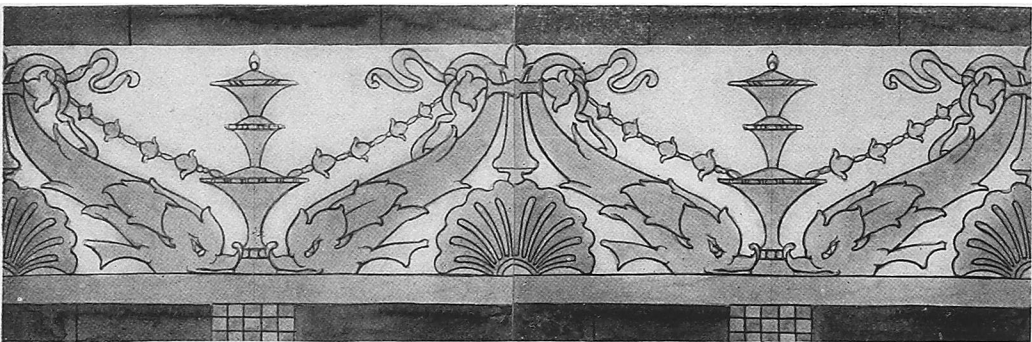


CLOISONNE MAT GLAZES—DESIGN COMPOSED OF ARCHITECTURAL DETAIL

—Courtesy American Encaustic Tiling Co., Zanesville, O.

inches of varied geometric design such as would have represented long days of labor and much outlay of gold if executed in mosaics of semi-precious stones. This new treatment, however, so far from proving to be a cheap imitation produced an entirely new and delightful effect which has gladdened the eye of all subsequent observers.

With the perfection of mat glazes in our time, tiling may be said to have reached the



EFFECTIVE FRIEZE SHOWING PATTERN OF DOLPHIN AND SHELLS

—Courtesy American Encaustic Tiling Co., Zanesville, O.



THE PERSIAN WARRIOR OF THE TWELFTH CENTURY
(Cloisonné outline in Gobelín glazes)

—Courtesy American Encaustic Tiling Co., Zanesville, O.

height of its beauty and artistic possibilities. There is a wonderfully mellow textural quality about mat-glazed tiles which softens colors exquisitely. It is this, together with the careful manner in which the matter is being worked out along strictly architectural lines, that promises so well for the future of this branch of ceramics in architecture, for, to be effective, the details of tiling must be architectural and derived from architectural sources that the work may harmonize with and become a part of the general scheme of construction.

Individual designs have been introduced heretofore without sufficient consideration of the fact that the work should be an item of an architectural scheme embracing the same details adapted to a different material. Today, however, authorities and experts on

ceramics of the highest attainments and greatest skill are engaged in working out absolutely harmonious treatments that shall enable this permanent and beautiful decoration to be used effectively upon the best designed and most imposing edifices.

Designs historically correct are carefully evolved to form a part of the general scheme of exterior architecture or interior decoration and it is likely that such tiling will tend in many instances to displace murals. These latter indeed, so far from adding beauty to the work of the architect, frequently compete with and have a tendency to detract from it. In this connection Ruskin has remarked: "It is true that there is no falsity and much beauty in the use of external color, and it is lawful to paint either picture or patterns on whatever sur-

face may seem to need enrichment, but it is not less true, that such practices are essentially unarchitectural; and while we cannot say that there is actual danger in an overuse of them, seeing that they have always been used most lavishly in times of most noble art, yet they divide the work into two parts and kinds, one of less durability than the other which dies away from it in process of ages and leaves it, unless it have noble qualities of its own, naked and bare. That enduring noblesse I should, therefore, call truly architectural; and it is not until this has been secured that the accessory of painting may be called in for the delight of the immediate times; nor this, as I think, until every resource of a more stable kind has been exhausted."

However, colored decorations can perhaps be best and most widely applied in faience columns, in the architecture of windows with panels of color at either side or in the tympanum above, in insides of doorways, pillars and pilasters and in little velvety insets in plain brick walls, not too strongly contrasting with the general tone of the building material. Mosaic work is also a valuable accessory to tiles, as the tesserae afford a contrast in surface textures. On the ribs of vaultings or of colonades, mosaics may be used to wonderful effect, their delicate intricacies outlining the graceful arches with an exquisite emphasis.

Not only tiling but mosaic as well has benefited through the discovery of mat glazes and the perfection of modern processes in ceramics. Where formerly only natural stones, marbles and other beautifully colored varieties were employed, with bits of gold under glass, today entire mosaics are more often constructed of tiny bits of glazed tile resulting in surfaces equally beautiful and achieved with much

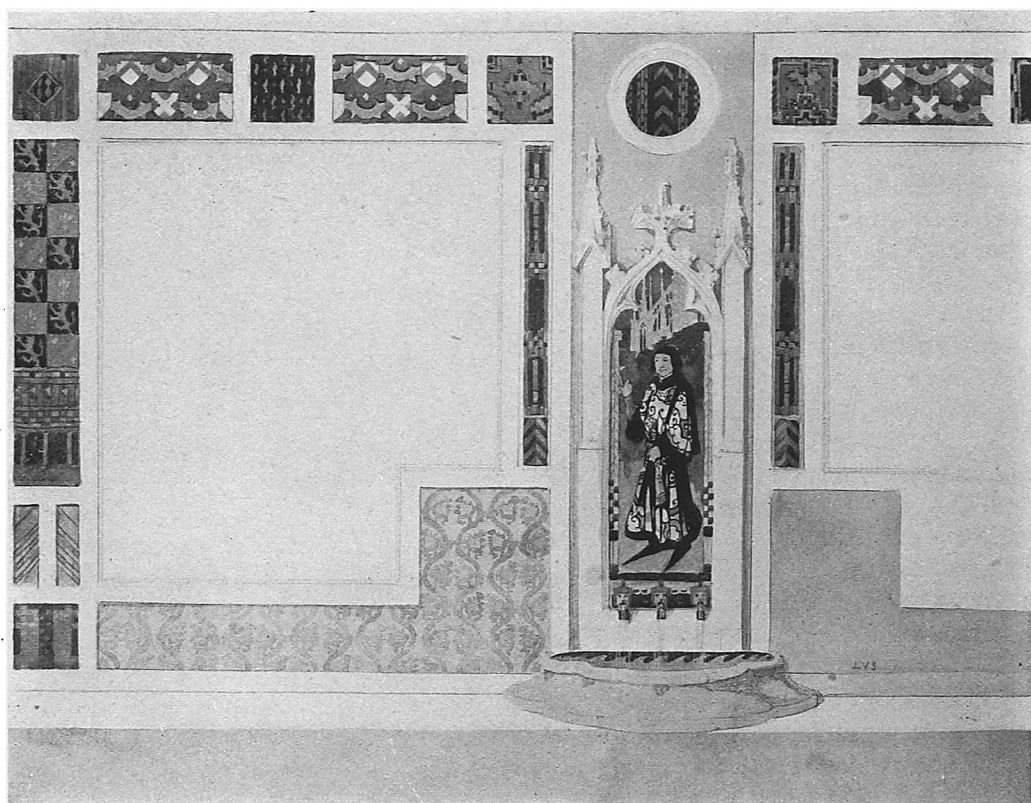


"THE STANDARD BEARER"

—Courtesy American Encaustic Tiling Co., Zanesville, O.
(Renaissance panel in Cloisonné outline and Gobelins glazes)

less expense of money and toil. The color range of glazed tile being absolutely unlimited mosaic work is thus given all the breadth of painting itself. Tiles are even glazed with a surface finish of fired silver or solid gold so that nothing need be wanting in the construction of a picture or a pattern. The tiles for mosaic work are molded in tiny strips about three inches long by three-quarters of an inch wide and may be readily broken in bits to fit into the pattern as required.

Hotels and public buildings generally offer the widest field for the use of tile and mosaic work, and the best examples of an extensive use of tile for interior decorations are to be seen in the great hotels of the country. From a utilitarian standpoint



SCHEME OF GOTHIC DECORATION FOR EXHIBITION PURPOSES
(Faience fountain in centre with Gobelin glaze panel)

—Courtesy American Encaustic Tiling Co., Zanesville, O.

alone glazed surfaces recommend themselves in such places by reason of their absolute cleanliness and the permanence which requires no repairs. However, so great is the beauty of rooms thus decorated that utility seems a secondary consideration. Mat glazes have contributed much to these effects, giving a softness of tone and apparent texture that imparts warmth. Arches and pillars, side walls and ceilings are often covered entirely with art tiles and this without the least suggestion of monotony in treatment so great is the variety and contrast afforded by the use of different patterns and glazes.

However, although public buildings, clubs and grill rooms find this a species of decoration most to be desired, there are many places about the modern home wherein

nothing else can so well serve the purposes of use and beauty. A fireplace is faience often proves the most desirable addition to a room, in fact, scarcely any other material that can be thus employed possesses in such a high degree the warmth and adaptability to purpose that make a fireplace of this fabric so essentially a part of the room instead of apart from it.

About the house and garden there are many spots where a bit of ceramic art may supply a charming touch of interest and of color. Fireplaces and fountains of faience offer the two necessary elements of fire and water in a manner at once practical and poetic. The warm fire for the winter evening, the cool drink for the summer day gain a charm from an artistic setting in keeping with the beauty of the dreams in-

spired by flickering flames or falling waters. One of the most unusual and delightful of faience fountains is that shown in our illustration on page 749, which would surely prove the central point of interest in a garden nook.

Modern mat-glazed tiles have a peculiarly delightful textural quality that harmonizes them with wood, velvet, tapestry, plaster or any other of the familiar fabrics of home interiors. The color range too, is practically unlimited for all the delicious mezzotints and broke and blended tones so well beloved of the aesthetic of today are produced in their utmost perfection in tile. Here, as in pottery, crystallization also plays an important part, resulting in surfaces which reveal the subtle charm of nature herself in one of her many moods. All of the beautiful bronze, golden, buff, rose, autumnal reds, lapis lazula blues, rich purples and shimmering iridescent greens and mottled butterfly and lizard skin effects of the finest art pottery are to be seen in the

tiling of today, affording an inexhaustible field for color contrast and harmonies. Complete pictures in tile can thus be executed with every care as to detail and with wonderfully pleasing effect. They may be included as a harmonious accessory to an aesthetic scheme of domestic interior decoration as appropriately as might a fine old Ming vase.

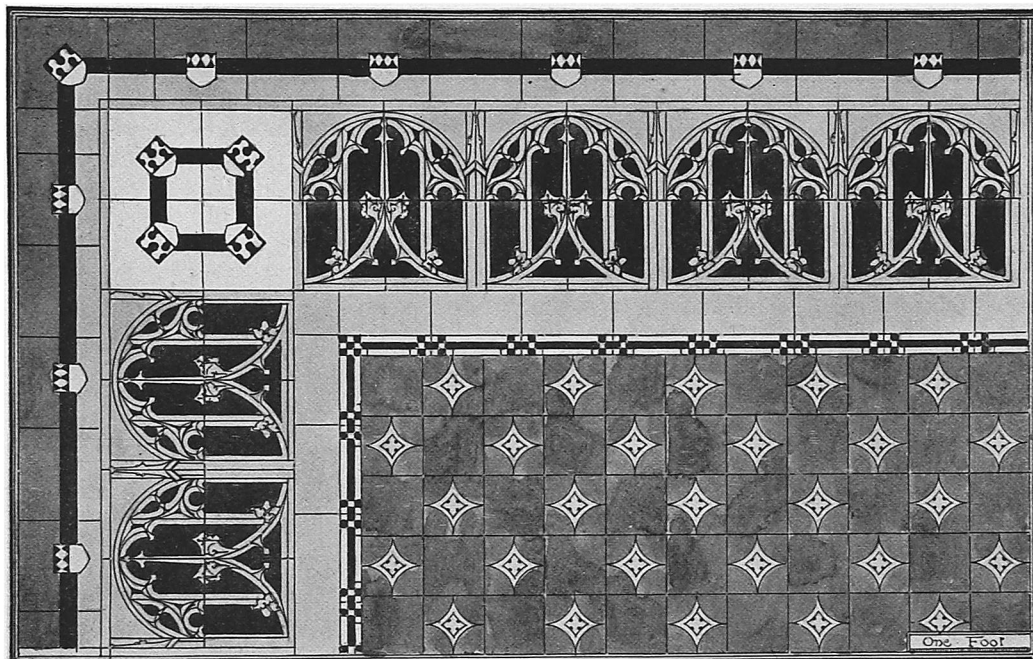
Borders of sculptured bas relief tiles may be used to construct graceful conventionalized floral frames about panels and fireplaces, while the motifs of different decorative periods may also be reflected in the tile work. Indeed, to such perfection has this branch of art been developed that panels of tile often rival tapestry in interest and beauty. These picture panels are the latest artistic phase of tile-work and promise to create a still greater interest in this branch of decorative art.

Our illustrations give some idea of the art displayed in these panels, though the richness of color and softness of texture



"PAN" DECORATION IN MAT GOBELIN GLAZES IN CLOISONNÉ OUTLINE

—Courtesy American Encaustic Tiling Co., Zanesville, O.



FLOOR IN CLOISONNÉ GLAZES WITH MAT SURFACES
(Design based on detail from classic example of French Gothic)

—Courtesy American Encaustic Tiling Co., Zanesville, O.

cannot be reproduced. One can well imagine how such panels might replace murals to depict historic events or supply the proper decorative presentation of the art of the period reflected in the building and its architecture. This is all the more appropriate as the pictures are constructed in the manner of such periods only as were notable for the use of tiling in their interior decoration.

Thus the Renaissance panel appearing in connection with this article and the Gothic scheme of decoration, embracing an ecclesiastical panel above a faience fountain, are both absolutely true to period. Tiling formed an important part of the decorations of many early English abbeys as specimens now preserved in museums attest. The Westminster Architectural Museum has a series of tiles from Chertsey Abbey representing incidents in the English romance of Sir Tristram and in the life of Richard Coeur de Leon.

In this early English use of tiles authorities on antiquarian art detect an Oriental influence. Indeed, it has been remarked that the influence of Persian or Saracenic art in England, in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, has never been fully recognized and appreciated; since, at this period, Gothic art is supposed to have reigned supreme, while the observant eye constantly notes an eastern feeling interwoven with other motifs in most branches of art. This influence doubtless came to Britain by way of Rome, brought thence by church dignitaries who had been impressed with the beauty of Italian churches and cathedrals while upon pious pilgrimages, or by returning crusaders.

The Persian picture panels, herein illustrated, are something in the nature of a revival of an ancient art, for such mural decorations were widely used in Persian interiors from the twelfth to the seventeenth centuries, gaining in popularity in later times. The pictures of "A Sultan" and "A

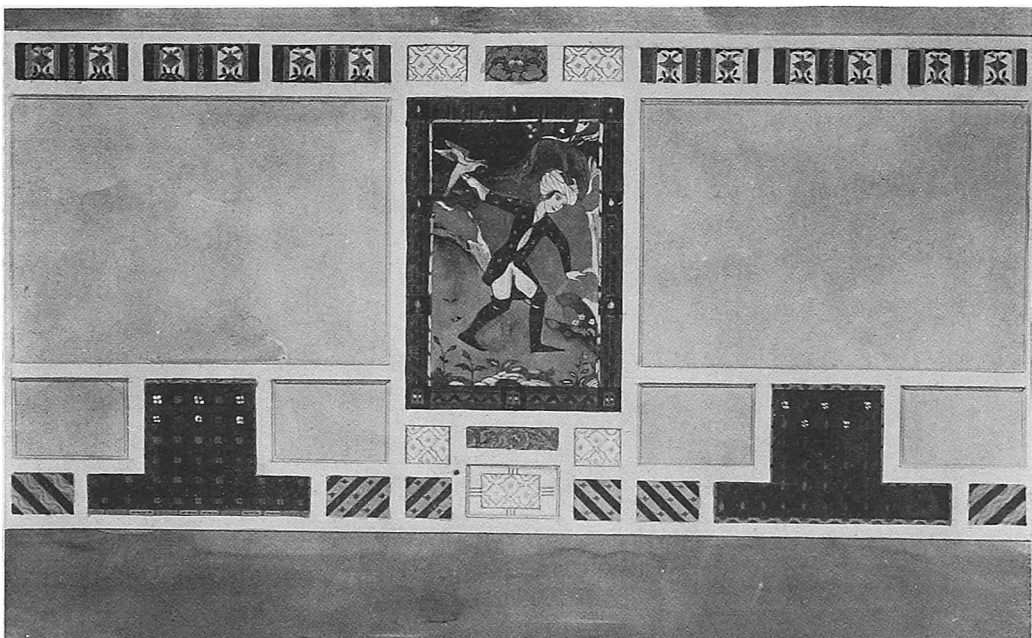
Persian Huntsman" are, in the spirit of the latter part of this period, graceful and luxurious, while "The Persian Warrior" belongs to the more barbaric earlier days of the twelfth century.

These may indeed seem to possess a realism not in keeping with the usual tendency of Persian art under Mohammedan restrictions. They have, however, been most faithfully executed and carefully considered and are true to the people and the times. The Persians prior to 622 A. D., when Mohammedan rule began, were fond of depicting flowers, animals and men realistically. For a long time after the establishment of the new religion the Persians, with very few exceptions, strictly obeyed the commands of Mohammed and refrained from making the likeness of any living thing out of a fear of incurring upon the day of judgment the penalty of being compelled to furnish a soul to inhabit such likeness, or, failing of that, to wander forever through the realms of darkness. In later years, however, as this restrictive influence weakened they grew more and more

to neglect its precepts so that there are many examples of the tile work of the seventeenth century which display highly realistic figures in low relief, a hunter on horseback being a favorite theme.

The panel depicting "Pan," while classic in theme, is modern in treatment and suited to the decorative purposes of the architecture and interior adornment of the day. There is something simple, flat, and poster-like about it which makes it a particularly agreeable mural. Indeed, all of these tile pictures possess this quality together with the power to suggest which arouses fancy and often proves so much more fascinating than the too literal presentation of truth.

Passing from the pictorial to the purely decorative type of panel, we have two delightful examples of the use of very different motifs in the illustrations of "A wall scheme showing the adaptation of the Renaissance style" and that of "Chinese mat glazed panels set in black wood frames." The Chinese panel indeed is a bewitching creation, rich in Oriental color and fancy. The broad, black lines of the



PERSIAN DECORATIONS FOR EXHIBITION

—Courtesy American Encaustic Tiling Co., Zanesville, O.



SIXTEENTH CENTURY SPANISH HISPANO
MAURESQUE EFFECT

(Mat Cloisonné glazes)

—Courtesy American Encaustic Tiling Co.,
Zanesville, O.

wood frames confine and emphasize this color in a manner truly Chinese and familiar through the borders of black about their richly colored embroideries. The grey faience wall is an admirable neutral background for this gorgeous bit of decoration, since the beauty of each is emphasized through association with the other.

"The design in Chinese style for floors" shows all the luxurious coloring of the Chinese rugs which are so much admired by collectors and decorators and would fittingly complete an interior where the walls were done in the grey faience and brilliant panels just considered.

Floor tiles that have all the beauty of parquetry or a fine rug may now be had to

vary the monotony of plain red squares, so long associated in our minds with such floors. Some of the most interesting and agreeable to the foot are constructed with a raised pattern, which brings the hard vitreous substance of the body of the tile to the surface, leaving the portions covered with a softer glaze sunk beneath and thus protected from the wear of constant footsteps. The raised surface of the predominating pattern being a bit rough, does not seem as hard or as cold to the foot as a smooth plain glazed tile, and by contrast with the more highly colored glazed portions the eye receives a more softened effect as of some less metallic substance.

The upper illustration on page 741 gives an idea of the beauty and harmony of these Cloisonné mat glazed floor tiles, while that on page 746 shows the corner of a floor



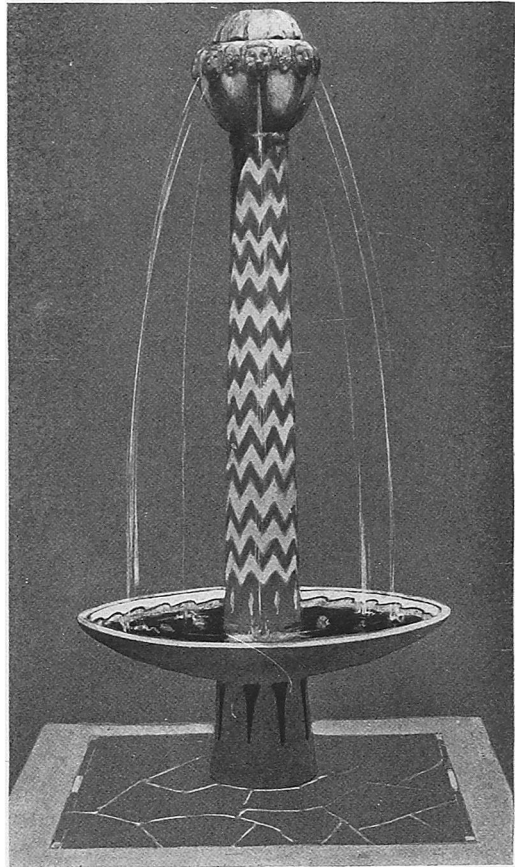
CHINESE MAT GLAZES, PANELS SET IN
BLACKWOOD FRAMES ON GREY FAIENCE
WALL —Courtesy American Encaustic Tiling Co.,
Zanesville, O.

with body and border of the tile pattern. This latter, being in the Gothic style, would be most appropriate in some of the exquisite examples of that type of architecture afforded by our churches, libraries and university buildings. These are but two of an almost innumerable array of artistic ceramic floorings many of which are particularly well suited for use in the home.

Corridors, entrance halls and sun porches are vastly improved by floors of such tile and the sidewalls may also be worked out in artistic mat-glazed productions to very good advantage. Another fine bit of ceramic convenience is afforded by radiator tiles which look like pierced stone work or metallic lattices and which are generally applied in sidewalls where the heater is sunk in a niche. The unsightly and unromantic radiator is thus restrained from conflict with a well planned and well designed interior and in its place we have an interesting lattice work of soft and harmonious color.

An excellent use of heraldic devices is seen in the "Sixteenth Century Spanish Hispano Mauresque Effect" in mat Cloisonné glazes shown in our illustration. Here indeed is a design which draws its inspiration from the golden age of tiling. Even the method of making these tiles as described in a preceding paragraph is identical with that employed by the builders of Alhambra at Granada and Alcazar at Seville in the fourteenth century. Their manner of fashioning tiles is thus given by an expert: "The peculiarity of their construction is that the design is marked out by lines or furrows with edges in slight relief, the interspaces being filled up with brilliant enamel colors, while the projecting ridges form boundaries for the several pigments. By this combination of color with relief a rich effect is produced, the colors seeming to gain in intensity by the slight degree of light and shade."

Of the practical uses of modern tiling one scarcely need speak, for the white tiled



RENAISSANCE FOUNTAIN IN FAIENCE
SHOWING ONE OF THE APPLICATIONS OF
THE COLORED SHAFTS

—Courtesy American Encaustic Tiling Co.,
Zanesville, O.

bathroom or blue tiled kitchen stand forth in the mind as worthy to be classed as the finest fruit of the highest civilization, since sanitary science has demonstrated that cleanliness is indeed, next to godliness. Little raised floral patterns ornamented by hand with colors and gold, applied in borders for bath rooms, render them as dainty as a bit of porcelain and even kitchen tiling is considered from an aesthetic standpoint. A model kitchen in blue and buff tile with a sink of buff porcelain to carry out the color scheme was truly appetizing and artistic. Hand decorated tiles, with Mother Goose rhymes and pictures, are offered for the nursery and their durability and cleanli-

ness as well as their beauty and charm recommend them above other more usual wall coverings.

Durability and cleanliness indeed, are features which recommend all earthenware products for they are, of all fabrics, most easily cleaned and most enduring. Heat and cold, frost and rain, and all of the destructive elements of nature fail to affect them. For this reason the development of all the underground stations of the New York subway in plain and ornamented tiling seems particularly appropriate. It is pleasant to note too, that these stations are not left bare of poetry and imagination for they are adorned with panel pictures in tile representing the early history of New York.

There is a strange fascination and suggestiveness about these underground pass-

ages thus adorned when one reflects that should our civilization crumble, as have others before it, these decorations might be buried for centuries and tens of centuries and be unearthed by the antiquarian of the future as fresh and bright and colorful as when first set in place, just as we today discover the glazed tiling of the ancient Egyptians and Chaldeans in almost perfect condition.

It seems not improbable that with modern methods of manufacture and all the skill of the greatest potters and experts in ceramics brought to bear upon the improvement of art tiling, we shall witness its use in greater quantity and for a wider range of decorative purposes in the near future than at any other period in the history of civilization and architecture.

